स्थित कुछ संयंत्र कोयले की अपनी आवश्यकता की पूर्ति हेतु कोयले का आयात कर रहे हैं।

(ड) कोयला कंपनियां गुजरात स्थित इन क्षेत्रों की कोयले की मांग पूर्णत: पूरी करने की स्थिति में है।

Import of custom free Nepalese Vanaspati

439. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed total custom duty exemption on the import of Nepalese Vanaspati;

(b) if so, what is its overall impact on the Indian Vanaspati industry in the country;

(c) whether the Indian Vanaspati manufacturers have protested against the import of custom free Nepalese Vanaspati; and

(d) if so, whether Government proposes to reconsider its decision; if not, why?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Under the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Trade, Government of India provides access to the Indian market free of customs duties and quantitives restrictions for all articles manufactured in Nepal, including Vanaspati, except for the articles in the Negative List annexed to the Treaty. If this facility leads to a surge in the imports of particular article from Nepal, appropriate action is to be taken after mutual consultation between the two Governments.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. Representations are being received from the Indian Vanaspati manufacturers and others protesting against import of Vanaspati from Nepal. They are being considered in the context of the provisions of the Treaty.

Industrial production and exports

440. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed forth growth of industrial production and exports during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) whether Government are satisfied with the achievements made so far;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) if not, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to boost exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The target rate of growth of industrial production for 1996-97 was 6.8%. Ministry of Industry have informed that no such target was fixed for 1997-98. The target rate of growth of industrial production for 1996-97 has been achieved as actual industrial growth rate during the year 1996-97 was 7.1%. The overall industrial growth rate during the year 1997-98 was 4.2%. A target growth of 20% in US$ terms and 18% in US$ terms was envisaged for exports during 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The export target fixed could not be achieved during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98. As per the provisional data of DGCI&S, the growth rate achieved in dollar terms were 4.01% and 2.64% and in Rupee terms 10.39% and 7.45% during 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively.

(d) Export performance is influenced interalia by international market conditions, infrastructure facilities and policy framework. Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing suitable environment, involvement of States in export promotion and consultation with Trade and Industry. Some of the recent steps taken in this regard include modification in DEPB rates, announcing of DEPB rate for about 300 new export items, preparing a medim term strategy for growth of exports, launching of Focus LAC Scheme and strengthening incentive schemes.

Performance of leather industry

441. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be please to state:

(a) the performance of leather industry during 1997-98 in terms of the targets set;

(b) the details of fresh additional investment made in the leather industry to harness its huge export potential;

(c) whether Government did formulate a comprehensive plan of action to score a lead

position in exports of leather goods through contract upgradations of technologies/skills through joint ventures; and

(d) what are the Ninth Plan perceptions for leather industry and steps taken/proposed to modernise and expand the production capacity of variety of material back by latest designs to capture world market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHAN HEGDE) (a) It has been estimated that Leather sector's achevement of exports during 1997-98 is US $ 1461 M, which is 82.08% of the Target set for the industry i.e., US$ 1780 M.

(b) Foreign investments are encouraged for constant upgradation of technologies/skills in the leather sector. Foreign investments to the tune of Rs. 138.92 cr. have been approved by Government in the past three years. Italian assistance to the tune of Rs. 30 cr. has been made available for modernisation of the leather sector through National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC). This assistance has a special focus on improving the techniques and quality of output in the tanning sector.

(c) and (d) Many Expert Committees including the Ninth Plan Working Group, have emphasised the need for the Modernisation of the Leather Industry for quality enhancement and quantitative improvement in production capacity to enable cost-competitiveness in the international market. Government has given special attention to the leather sector at various levels with a view to increasing export. Inherent strengths of the Indian Leather Industry, especially in the tanning sector, have been taken into account, to formulate suitable strategies and increase India's share in the global market. Concerted efforts are afoot to achieve this goal. Government of India has launched a UNDP assisted National Leather Development Programme (NLDP) and a Leather Technology Mission (LTM) which are under implementation. These programmes are enabling an integrated approach to achieve higher productivity, make available high quality leather, encourage product differentiation and thereby catalyse the rapid growth and diversification of the Industry. India has targeted an export quantum of US$ 4.5 billion for the leather sector by the year 2001-2002.

Removal of quantitative restriction

442. *SHRI SOLIPETA RAMA CHANDRA REDDY:*
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the submission made by India at the World Trade Organisation Panel looking into the dispute with United States over the removal of quantitative restrictions on imports by India; and

(b) the details of plan in this regard to remove import restrictions by April, 2003?

THE MINISTER OF COMMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHAN HEGDE) (a) and (b) Consequent upon the first written submission made by the United States on 31st March, 1998 to the dispute settlement panel of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in connection with India's dispute on quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes India made its counter submission to the panel on 1st May, 1998.

Broadly, India has submitted to the panel that:

(i) India's time-schedule for the removal of its import restrictions over six years, in three consecutive phases of 3 years, 2 years, and one year, starting 1st April, 1997, is consistent with Article XVIII: II of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994;

(ii) India's import restrictions satisfy the requirements of Article XVIII: B of the GATT 1994;

(iii) The United States, and not India, must assert and demonstrate that India's time schedules are inconsistent with India's obligations under Article XVIII: II of the GATT 1994;

(iv) The Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions and the General Council of the WTO have the exclusive authority, and not a dispute settlement panel, to determine whether a time-schedule for the removal of import restrictions is consistent with Article XVIII: II of the GATT 1994; and

(v) The views of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the issues raised in the dispute are not dispositive.